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HISTORY

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OF

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WRIGHT COUNTY

STATE OF IOWA.

BY J. H. STEVENSON.

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR.

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DES MOINES, IOWA:
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1870.

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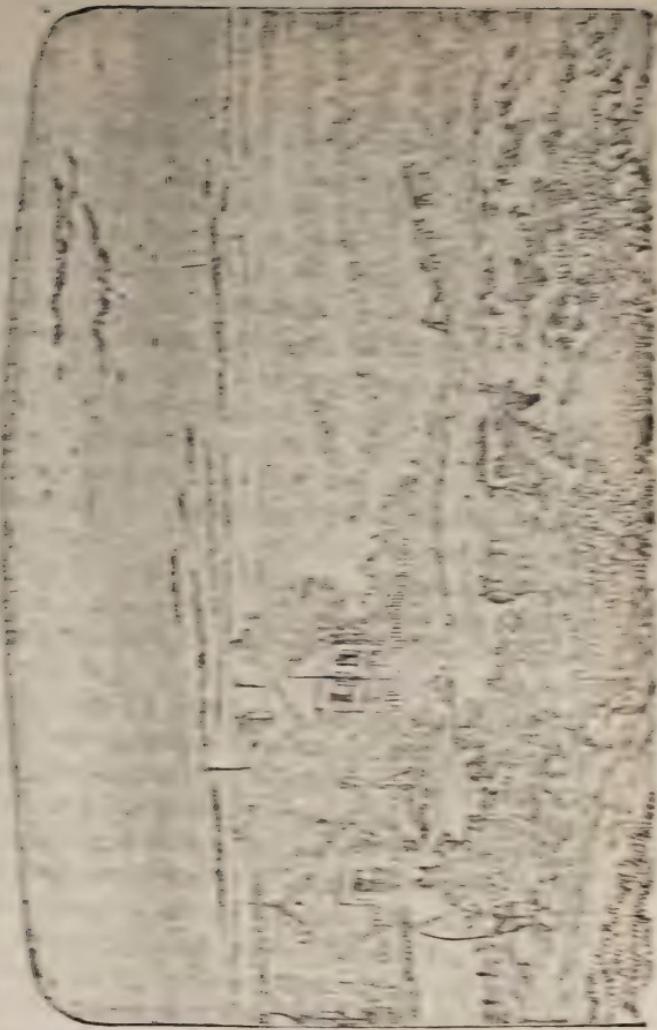
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Oct. 3, 1890.

1758108

HISTORY OF WRIGHT COUNTY.

Historical Department of Iowa

PHANTOM FARM IN WILMINGTON COUNTY.



PREFACE.

The object in preparing this little work is for the purpose of presenting to Eastern men the many inducements that the West holds out to them, and the many benefits and blessings to be derived from their emigrating to the extensive, rich, fertile, and productive fields of the West.

There are to-day thousands of industrious men in the East who, notwithstanding all their industry, economy, and hard labor, are scarcely able to make ends meet, and who go on from year to year eking out a mere existence, and it matters not however hard they struggle, or however parsimoniously they live, are unable to lay up anything for old age, sickness, or the many vicissitudes that are liable to fall upon them. To such as these we commend a careful perusal of these pages, so that they may see how all these distressing circumstances may be obviated and overcome. We propose placing in your hands a true picture of a portion of our Western country, and if the scene we lay before you does not awaken in you a longing desire to realize all the benefits to be derived therefrom, the fault will not be ours. Were Eastern people, with growing sons daughters, who are altogether dependent on their labor for support, but who, on the slightest collapse in trade, or a crisis in business, are thrown (as they often are) into a suffering condition, but aware of how easily they could better their circumstances by coming West, they would not hesitate a moment between the two positions. It is our purpose to devote this little work to Wright County, in the State of Iowa, a county that is second to none in the State, as the State is second to none in the Union.

It is not for any merit or ability exhibited in its pages that we ask a diligent perusal of them, but that we show to our Eastern brothers and fellow countrymen the means to be adopted whereby they may better their condition and become independent.

We would say to them that the West offers you treasures of wealth, if you will only lay hold of the means by which they may be obtained; and take you can do by coming with strong arms and willing hands, and hence determined on success.

To be candid, we would say none other need come, nor in fact are they wanted. The West is not a country that affords any comfort to the idle, the loafer, the faddy, or the would-be-gentleman, for all such are looked upon with the greatest contempt; but the good, honest, industrious workman who comes will find himself honored and respected, and all such will be gladly welcomed to the fertile lands of Western Country by all those who have provided them to its removals.

AUTHOR.

HISTORY OF WRIGHT COUNTY,

STATE OF IOWA.

The geographical position of Wright county is a little northwest of the center of the State. It is bounded on the north by Hancock, south by Hamilton, east by Franklin, and west by Humboldt and Webster counties. Possessing, as it does, sixteen congressional townships, it contains an area of five hundred and seventy-six square miles.

The east fork of the Boone, which takes its rise from numerous lesser streams and springs in Hancock county, and which flows in a southwesterly direction, and the west fork, which takes its rise in Kossuth county, and flows in a southeasterly direction, enter Wright county in the northwest corner, and form a confluence with the Boone river proper at or near Luni, in the township of Boone, this being the northwest township of the county. The Boone proper flows southerly along the extreme west of the county, from its point of confluence with the east and west forks at or near Luni, through the townships of Liberty and Eagle Grove, till it reaches that of Troy, when it takes a southeasterly course, and leaves the county by flowing through the southeast corner of Troy township, entering Hamilton county in the northeast portion of Fremont township. On the east side of the county we have the Iowa river, formed almost

similar to the Boone on the west. This river is formed by two lesser streams, known as the East Branch and West Fork, the former rising in Hancock county and running southerly; the latter rising in the vicinity of Crystal Lake, situated in the north of the same county, and flowing southeasterly, both streams forming a confluence with the Iowa proper about a mile-and-a-half north of Belmond, a beautiful village situated on the Iowa river, partly in Pleasant township and partly in Belmond.

On the confluence of these streams being formed, the Iowa river flows south, through Belmond township, entering Iowa township in the northwest corner, thence in a southeasterly direction passing through the northeast corner of Vernon township, where it enters Franklin county a little north of the village of Otisville, but by making a slight curvature re-enters Wright county a short distance south of the same village; thence for a distance of three miles it runs due south, when taking an easterly course it again enters Franklin county, bidding Wright farewell. Originally the county contained but eight townships, but since its organization the number has been increased to eleven. Prior to the county being organized it was attached to Webster county for judicial and revenue purposes. At that time Webster, in addition to its present area, contained what is now the counties of Hamilton and Humboldt.

The meeting for the organization of Wright county was held in the log-cabin of S. B. Hewitt, Sr., on the Boone river, and Judge Meservey, then county judge of Webster county, sent H. B. Martin, then county surveyor and notary public, to attend the meeting, for the purpose of qualifying officers to hold an election to fill county offices. The election took place in August, 1855, and the first officers elected were as

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LEATHER of all KINDS,

Lace Leather, French Kip and Calf, all kinds of Findings, Shoe Thread, Wax, Awls, Shoe Knives, Pegs, Nails, Brushes, &c.

follows: David Dean, county judge; C. H. Martin, clerk of District court; Anson Brassfield, treasurer and recorder; Scott Crapper, sheriff; S. B. Hewitt, jr., county surveyor; William Davis, coroner; W. H. Montgomery, school fund commissioner, and N. E. Paine, prosecuting attorney; and thus Wright county took its place among the counties of the State of Iowa. When the first meeting for organization was held, there seems to have existed a considerable spirit of rivalry between the settlers on the two rivers, for we find about the time the meeting was held at S. B. Hewitt's, on the Boone, a similar meeting was held at Belmond, on the Iowa, but owing to the absence of a proper qualifying officer, the meeting accomplished nothing.

When the county judge system was abolished, the county became under the government of a Board of supervisors, who held their first meeting in January, 1861.

We have already said that the county contains eleven townships, and in order to be more accurate in our statements in compiling the history of the county, we will take each township separately, commencing at

TROY.

This is the southwest township of the county, and following the road on the east side of the Boone leading from Webster City, is the first township we enter on leaving Hamilton county. The first settler here was William Striker, who, coming in the fall of 1854, located in Bach Grove, on the Boone river. In the succeeding year, however, and during 1856, he was followed by J. D. Sells, James Barton, the Middleton brothers, and one Mr. Wilcox, and these constitute the earliest settlers of this township. Like all other

JNO. McMILLER,

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ALSO.

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Stone, Wooden, & Willow-Ware.

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Best & Cheapest Place

To Buy Groceries in Town !

Store under Old Town Hall,

SENECA STREET,

WEBSTER CITY, IOWA.

early settlers in a new country, these men had to contend against a great many difficulties and struggle against numerous disadvantages, not the least of which was, having to haul their provisions a distance of over seventy miles. This laborious work continued up to 1859, flour at that time ranging from five to eight dollars per hundred pounds. The wet seasons of '58-9 rendered grain-raising utterly impossible, and added greatly to the hardships the early settlers had to undergo. Once a permanent foothold was gained, immigration commenced to set in slowly but steadily, and the township contains at the present time (1870) something like sixty families, with more still coming. It also contains some very excellent farms, among which is that of Mr. Cook, Wm. Striker, the Middleton brothers, and that of J. D. Sells; but while these may be classed as among the best in the township, there are others rapidly approaching that state of perfection that renders the farmer's life one of uninterrupted ease and happiness. The farm of J. D. Sells, we are led to believe, is the largest in the county, containing in all nine hundred and eighty acres, two hundred of which is timber, and four hundred and fifty under cultivation. It is situated on the county line between Wright and Hamilton counties, a portion of his land lying in each, and while his residence is located in the former, his barn and out-houses are built in the latter. His taxes, however, are paid in Wright county, and thereby he becomes a citizen of the same.

The first school taught in the township was in a log cabin 12 x 14, but as early as 1859 a good frame school-house, 24 x 30, was built. Schools being considered by our western settlers as of the first importance to the welfare and prosperity of a community, they pay the greatest attention to these institutions, and for the

J. C. GAYER,

Manufacturer



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BELMOND,

Wright County, Iowa.

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Manufacturer and Dealer in all kinds of

TIN-WARE

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All orders promptly attended to and done in a neat and
satisfactory manner.

Belmond, Wright County, Iowa.

better accommodation of the rising youth, we find no less than four good school-houses in this township, one of which is built of brick. The residence of William Striker, a very fine house indeed, is also built of brick, and we believe these constitute the only buildings of the kind in the township. There is a sad tragedy connected with the history of this township, which, when perpetrated, threw the whole community into the greatest state of excitement. Two brothers, by name Otenheimer, Germans by birth, and not long in this country, settled in Wright county, choosing Troy township for their location. One was married and brought his wife with him, and the other was single, but all lived together. The origination of the difficulty that caused the death of one of the brothers, and the other to be stamped with the mark of Cain, we are not prepared to say, some attributing it to jealousy, and others to something else, but be it what it may, certain it is, that the younger brother came to his death by a jack-knife in the hands of the elder, and this most foul and inhuman act constitutes the sad page in the history of this township.

Bach Grove, which is situated on the Boone river, and which covers an area of between three and four thousand acres of heavy timber, of almost every variety, is one of the beauties bestowed by nature upon this township. Of this timber, the black walnut, elm, and oak grow to more than ordinary proportions. There is an excellent steam saw-mill built here, where native lumber can be bought for twenty dollars per thousand feet.

Here, although no church edifice is erected, religious service is held regularly every Sabbath. There are also two Sabbath School organizations in the place, the first being organized by J. D. Sells, as early as 1859, in a small log-cabin, both of which at the present time are numerically well represented.

G. W. ROGERS,

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For Medicinal Purposes.

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BELMOND,

Wright County, Iowa.

EAGLE GROVE.

This is the name of the township north of Troy, and is one of the western tier of townships of the county. The first settler who came to settle in it was one William Davis, who came in 1854, but being unable or unwilling to undergo the hardships to which early settlers are exposed, he removed to some clime more congenial to his feelings after having remained about a year. The next that came were N. B. Paine, S. B. Hewitt, sr., and S. B. Hewitt, jr., who, on arriving, set to work and built a log-cabin close to the Boone river, in which they all lived. It was in this cabin the meeting was held for organizing the county. Anticipating the difficulties they would have to undergo on settling in a new country, this party brought with them four large wagons, loaded with provisions, all the way from Davenport, on the Mississippi, a distance of nearly three hundred miles. The nearest post-office to them was at Homer, the then county seat of Webster county, and distant from Eagle Grove thirty miles or over.

N. B. Paine, shortly after his arrival, built a log-cabin on the prairie where he settled. Then there was neither tree nor bush nearer to him than the timber on the Boone river; but things have changed considerably since then, and now, instead of the log-cabin, he lives in a splendid frame house, around which is a beautiful grove of forest trees planted by his own hands. Surrounding the house is a beautiful garden, with nice graveled walks, flower-beds, grape-vines, and fruit-trees.

James Gray and William Sills were among the earliest settlers, all of whom have met with great prosperity since their advent into Wright county.

These old settlers are now the happy possessors of

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PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTIST!

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Known to modern art.

Satisfaction Given or no Pay.

elegant and well improved farms, of which in particular may be mentioned those of Judge Hewitt, John Wasson, and Mr. Allen, and that of N. B. Paine. The settlers who came in a few years later seem to be men of energy, perseverance, and industry, and just the very kind of men to build up a new country. The appearance of their farms proves that they have not been idle while their older neighbors have been going ahead. J. Q. Hanna has opened up a splendid farm, which in the course of a few years promises to be among the best. At present the township contains about two hundred and fifty of a population, and at the present rate of emigration will soon double this number. It contains three school-houses, two of frame and one of brick.

Eagle Grove was once an Indian village, and when laid out as a township there were five hundred wigwams upon it, but the march of civilization extending westward, caused the savage to leave these beautiful hunting-grounds and seek others elsewhere, in order that the plow might be introduced to the sod, and the land yield forth its wealth in rich and luxuriant harvests.

While traveling through this township in search of material with which to build this little work, a sad occurrence befel a family by the name of Dersheit. The husband was out burning some prairie, as is the custom in our western country, and the fire extending to the fence, he told his wife to go and guard the same from being burned. Having her child with her at the time, a little infant some fifteen months old, she set it down in a place she deemed secure, and hastened to the spot where the fence was in danger. While employed in working to save the fence, the wind had swept the fire in the direction of the child, and in a very short time the poor little innocent perished in

R. U. MEEKER,

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Implements of all kinds,

And of the latest and most approved pattern, consisting of

THE WORLD-REOWNED

Marsh Harvester,

WOODS' SELF-RAKE,

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BREAKING PLOWS,

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DURFEE STUBBLE PLOW,

All of which I sell at

FACTORY PRICES.

I have also constantly on hand *Pumps and Reapers*
of all kinds.

BELMOND, Wright County, Iowa.

the flames. The fence was saved, but when the mother returned for her child, all she found was its lifeless form blackened and burned to a crisp, and thus in saving the fence the mother's first-born was lost.

LIBERTY.

Major Winter Brassfield is the pioneer settler of this township, and is acknowledged by all as the first settler in the county. It is very interesting to sit and listen to the Major narrating some of his hunting expeditions on his first settling on the Boone, for it was by this means the tables of all the early settlers were supplied with meat.

We spent a short time in the Major's company, in our tour around the county, and must acknowledge that we were completely surprised to find a man of such rough exterior, possessed with such free and fluent conversation and such profound knowledge. It was in 1854 that the Major settled on the Boone, and the following year he built a saw and grist-mill, this being the first in the county.

The town of Liberty, of which we will speak hereafter, was laid out in 1855, by H. B. Martin. Among the early settlers of this township were John Melrose, Nelson Usher, J. Doty, M. Barnes, C. N. Overbaugh, John Boyles, Wellington Neece, O. C. McIntosh, Fred Keeling, and W. H. Montgomery.

This township contains some excellent land, and has an abundance of good timber. Running through it is a beautiful stream known by the name of Otter Creek, which empties into the Boone at the town of Liberty. Within its borders are some well improved farms, all under a high state of cultivation. Among the most improved are those of M. Barnes, W. H. Montgomery, C. N. Overbaugh, Nelson Usher, and Fred Keeling,

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Having at a great expense erected, finished, and furnished
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FIRST CLASS HOUSE,

With all the

MODERN HOTEL APPOINTMENTS,

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We are now ready to accommodate the traveling public, and
all who may favor us with their patronage,

IN THE VERY BEST MANNER,

And at the

MOST REASONABLE PRICES.

We have in connection with the house, well arranged and
extensive stabling accommodations.

FREE "BUS" TO AND FROM THE CARS!

On the suburbs of the town Wellington Neece has a splendid farm of one hundred and eighty acres, which, from the attention he is giving it, and by his setting out trees and planting poplar hedges, is destined to become one of the most beautiful places on the Boone.

We beg to be excused if we become a little personal, and say that the farm of M. Barnes constitutes one of the beauties of the Boone, and the number of fruit-trees he has set out, while budding, blossoming, and bearing, constitutes one of its finest features.

Adjoining this is that of Nelson Usher, which presents an appearance of great comfort, and shows that the hand of industry has not been idle.

A little farther up the river is that of C. N. Overbaugh, containing some three hundred acres of as beautiful land as lies beneath the sun, all well improved. We found this gentleman engaged in making preparations to build a large and splendid residence, which, when completed, will add greatly to the beauty of his place, and be quite an ornament to the township.

Next is that of W. H. Montgomery, and the state of perfection to which he has brought his place, indicates years of hard toil and labor.

Like other settlers making for themselves homes on the frontier, the early settlers of this township had to haul their supplies a distance of from sixty to a hundred miles, but a few years of industry and prosperity rendered this no longer necessary, and instead of depending on others to be supplied, they are in a condition to supply. There are four school-houses in the township, which show the facilities the youth have for acquiring knowledge and education. Its present population numbers about three hundred.

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Will Buy and Sell Real Estate on Commission,

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Artificial Substitutes

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TEETH EXTRACTED WITHOUT PAIN

By the use of Nitrous Oxide. Office hours from 9 A.M. to 12 M., and from 1 to 5 P. M.

Rooms in Commercial Block, with Dr. Curtis.

BOONE.

This is the northwest township of the county, and adjoins Hancock county on the south. Luni is the name of the post-office at this place, and while mentioning post-offices, we may as well here remark that the people of the county are well provided with mail facilities, as each township has its own post-office. The first settler in this township was C. H. Martin, who settled on the banks of the Boone in the fall of 1855. Following him came Fred Zimmerman, the Packard brothers, Henry Frank, Dr. C. H. Crapper, R. Payne, A. McIntyre, Sylvester Brockway, and W. H. Gillespie. These may be classed the earliest settlers of Boone township. The wet season of 1858 compelled these pioneers to resort to many and different measures to obtain breadstuffs. The impassable condition of the unbridged rivers, creeks, and streams rendered hauling impossible, and necessity constrained them to live on what little corn they were fortunate enough to raise. For months flour was unseen, and all they had to rely upon for meal was one corn-cracker, run by horse-power, and some were even compelled to grind their corn in coffee-mills, in order to procure bread. During these trying times, a spirit of the greatest kindness existed among the settlers, and what little they had they willingly and cheerfully shared with each other.

There was one blessing they enjoyed, however, which had a tendency to alleviate their suffering, namely, that of an abundance of wild game, which supplied them with meat, and a river that afforded them a sufficiency of fresh fish. These hard times did not prevent the people from attending to the education of their children, for we find about this time school was being held in the log-cabin of C. H. Martin.

R. I. BURBISON,

DEALER IN

CLOTHING,

BOOTS AND SHOES,

HATS & CAPS,

AND
GENTS' FURNISHING GOODS!

SENECA STREET,

WEBSTER CITY, - IOWA.

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Dry Goods,

CLOTHING, GROCERIES,

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HATS AND CAPS.

Gents' Furnishing Goods!

Commercial Block,

Webster City, Iowa.

Since that time, three comfortable school-houses have been built, which afford ample accommodation for all the scholars in the township.

Boone, at present, contains a population of about one hundred and fifty people in all.

It also contains some very fine natural advantages, being well timbered, and having two beautiful streams of living water, one of which is Prairie Creek, and the other Eagle Creek, besides some others of less importance. In keeping with other townships, Boone can boast of having some splendid farms, a few of which are well worthy of mention. C. H. Martin and E. Gibbons, who are located close to the river, have their farms well improved, and under a high state of cultivation; while about a mile or so from the timber, out on the prairie, W. H. Gillespie has a very handsome farm. Around his house is a beautiful young grove, set out by his own hands, and which even now has attained sufficient growth as to render it quite an ornament of beauty to his place, and to afford an excellent shade from the sun in summer, and a shelter from the severe winds of winter.

In his garden, with other fruit trees, stands a peach tree which, yielding its fruit, gives Mr. Gillespie the credit of raising the first peaches in Northwestern Iowa. When the county judge system of government was abolished and that of supervisors adopted, in 1861 this gentleman was the member elected to represent his township in the Board, and the satisfaction given to his constituents has kept him in the Board ever since, and at the present time he occupies the distinguished position of Chairman to that honorable body.

BELMOND.

This township is one of those that form the northern tier of the county and is situated on the Iowa

CHAS. A. CLARK,
Attorney-at-Law,
WEBSTER CITY, IOWA.
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in all the
COURTS OF IOWA,
AND
U. S. DISTRICT
AND
CIRCUIT COURTS.

REFERENCES GIVEN

 *required.*

river. The first permanent settlers in the township were A. Dumond, T. Oliver, and Dr. L. H. Cutler, all of whom came in the spring of 1855. The year preceding this, however, a party consisting of three families had emigrated into the township and took claims, but owing to the fears created by rumored outrages being perpetrated by the Indians, they abandoned them and fled, making way for men possessed with more spirit and courage and better adapted to bear the hardships accompanying a frontier life.

Those already mentioned as coming in the spring of '55 set to work and built a log cabin in which no less than twenty-one persons lived all through the summer of that year. The first frame house put up in the township was built by Dr. L. H. Cutler in 1856, in which he opened a store. It appears when the Doctor came in 1855 he only entered his land, when he went home, but returned again early in 1856, bringing with him his family and six men. In partnership with A. Dumond, he then set to work and built a saw mill on the east bank of the Iowa, but a few months after it being built it was washed away by a raise in the river. During the fall of 1855 and spring of 1856 nine families came and settled in the township, receiving a hearty welcome from those who had preceded them. In the spring of 1857 we again find Dr. Cutler engaged in erecting a steam mill a little south of where the mill stood that had been washed out. The machinery of this mill was subsequently sold and moved to Kansas. Now came the fearful massacre of Spirit Lake in which the savages spared neither age, sex, nor condition, but carried on an indiscriminate slaughter of every white person that came within their reach. The news of

BELMONT MILLING!

BELMONT, Wright Co., Iowa.

CHOICE FAMILY FLOUR.

G. A. THOMPSON & CO.,
PROPRIETORS.

this horrible butchery spreading all over the north-west filled the settlers with the greatest alarm, and every preparation was made by the few settlers of this township to defend their homes to the last.

In this great extremity, when people were fleeing from their homes to avoid the scalping knife or the tomahawk of the bloodthirsty Indians, the people of Belmond and Pleasant townships and a number of men from the adjoining county of Hancock, assembled at Doctor Cutler's store and organized themselves into a military company with the Doctor as captain. On this organization being effected, the men immediately set to work and erected a mud fort on the west side of the river on the top of a hill overlooking the now beautiful village of Belmond, to be spoken of hereafter. A few families left to seek safer abodes, but by far the greater portion remained, and even the wives of the brave men who formed the military company volunteered to remain and share the fate of their husbands, cooking for them in turn and doing everything in their power to assist them in their labors.

For better security, the women were all gathered into one log cabin while the men remained in the fort and established a regular routine of military discipline. Pickets were established and sentinels posted and relieved regularly and everything began to assume a military aspect. They knew well what kind of an enemy threatened them; they knew they were cunning, crafty, shrewd, and treacherous, and they knew also that nothing could move them to be merciful, and knowing this they were ever on the alert and always attentive to duty. After waiting several days without hearing any word from their brother settlers on the Boone and fearing lest they had all perished, they dispatched O. W. McIntosh and Thomas Sheets on a scout to the Boone river to learn how matters

S. D. PIERCE,

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Dry Goods,

CLOTHING,

BOOTS & SHOES

Hats and Caps,

HARDWARE,

QUEENSWARE,

AND

MILINERY GOODS!



BELMOND, Wright Co., Iowa,

stood in that direction, with instructions to return within twenty-four hours. On reaching the Boone they found all as still and silent as if death had entered every household and swept with one fell swoop all their inmates. Moving cautiously along they turned their steps southward toward Webster City, and found every settlement completely deserted. What had become of the people? to where had they fled? It was evident that the knife of the savage had not been at work here for not a sign presented itself to lead to this belief, but yet not a human face was visible in all that section of country. They did not return, however, but continued to keep moving down the river with the hope of finding some living creature from whom they might receive some information concerning what had become of the settlers. On, and still on they went, but yet they found nothing but a deserted country until they reached Webster City, in Hamilton county, where all was excitement and agitation, and where the people were busily engaged fitting out an expedition for Spirit Lake, the scene of the terrible massacre.

It was here the scouting party from the mud fort at Belmond received the first information concerning the Boone settlers, for it was to this place they had all repaired on receiving the news of the horrible butcheries that had been perpetrated on the settlers around Spirit Lake. All this time the people at Belmond were in the greatest anxiety, for from the reports that were brought to them by people from the north, they expected the Indians would be shortly upon them, but from what direction or the hour they would strike, they were unable to say. The non-return of the scouts within the time stipulated in their instructions, tended greatly to increase the reigning anxiety that was felt by the whole community. Twenty-four hours passed,

Boots & Shoes.



J. WILLIAMSON & Co.,

Would respectfully announce to the public that they have
just received a full stock of

**BOOTS & SHOES,
LEATHER AND FINDINGS,**

Of all sorts, such as

*Lasts, Boot-Trees, Clamps, Thread, Nails, Crimps,
Blacking, Brushes, Awls, Wax, Bristles,
Pegs, Pegging Awls, Hafsts, etc.*

**Particular Attention paid to Custom Work,
AND ALL ORDERS PROMPTLY FILLED.**

EASTERN WORK warranted, and all rips sewed free of charge. Give us a call and examine our stock, and remember that we never misrepresent goods,

And shall not be undersold.

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and they did not come, thirty hours, and no sign of them. Thirty-six hours had now passed since they started out and still they are absent. Surely something must have happened to them or they would have returned.

This became the prevailing belief, and upon consultation it was deemed expedient to send out two more men, and thereupon, on the same afternoon, George Dumond and A. Dukes were dispatched on a similar reconnoisance as the former two.

Darkness had set in long before they reached the Boone, and the same death like stillness that the preceding scouts had found still prevailed.

Arrived at the Boone, they headed their horses down stream, and night having set in, the greatest precaution marked their every movement. With revolvers in hand, and ready for any emergency that might arise, they pursued their course down stream in hope of gaining some satisfactory information concerning what had taken place and what was then going on. No human form however was to be found. No human sound greeted their ears—all around them was hushed in silence. Scarcely knowing what to make of the situation in which they found themselves placed, they came to the conclusion to push on down the river as far as Webster City. While moving cautiously along, ever on the alert, all at once a sound came to their ears as of something moving through the brush. What could it be? The night was dark, and what or who it was they were unable to discover. Being true western men, and possessed with more than common courage, they were bound to ascertain whether the sound that had startled them was caused by Indian, man, beast, or goblin, and for this purpose, getting their horses well in hand, they charged towards the spot whence the noise came, firing their revolvers as

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they dashed along. Arrived at the spot they discovered that whatever it was had fled, when, resting for a moment, the sound of something going across the prairie at great speed attracted their attention. They lost no time in idle meditation, but striking their rowels into their horses sides, dashed off at full speed in a regular "Charge, Chester, charge," "On, Stanley, on," style.

On sped the pursuer and pursued, nothing to guide the horsemen but the sound of the hoofs coming from the object of which they were in hot pursuit, till finally overtaking it they discovered, greatly to their mortification and chagrin, that it was nothing but a poor old cow that had been browsing among the brush and which, at their approach, had taken to her heels at the report of the revolvers.

This little incident, however ludicrous it may appear, had the effect of changing the monotony of the journey of the scouts, and of causing them to pass over a considerable distance of the way in much shorter time than they otherwise would have done.

Scarcely, however, had they overcome the feelings of risibility that had taken possession of them on discovering the object of their chase, than they discried a party of men coming up the river on an expedition similar to their own. Regardless of who or what their numbers were, the two scouts from Belmond again set spurs to their horses and pushed on to meet them. So sudden was their appearance, that they completely filled the other party with surprise and alarm, who, on beholding them, instantly wheeled about and galloped off at a speed that rendered all efforts to overtake them unavailing. No other incident transpired on the way until they reached Webster City, where they found the two scouts that had

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preceded them and a great portion of settlers from along the Boone. Next day, after inspiring new confidence in the hearts of those who had left their homes, the four scouts started on their return march to the mud fort. While this reconnoissance to the Boone was being made, however, the party at the fort had been reinforced by a company from Alden, some thirty miles down the river, in Hardin county. No information had reached the garrison in the mud fort since the first scouting party was dispatched, and the greatest anxiety was felt by all. They were determined, however, to remain steadfast, and if the Indians did attack them to defend themselves and their homes to the last. Fortunately such an emergency did not take place, for on the return of the scouts they were informed that the cause of all the danger from an Indian attack was over, and that confidence being restored, the people were returning to their homes. On receipt of this information the garrison was disbanded, each man returning to his own domicile to follow the peaceful routine of every day life, and thus ended the great Indian scare. All feeling once more secure the march of improvement resumed its way and new buildings commenced springing up.

We find that during the year '57, notwithstanding the great Indian panic, a fine school-house was erected while about the same time the Western Hotel was built by O. O. Kent, and a splendid brick residence by A. Dumond. The following year, 1858, G. A. Amesbury built a saw and grist mill on the site where formerly stood the mill erected by Doctor Cutler and A. Dumond, and which was washed away in the spring of 1856. By repeated changes the mill came into the hands of its present owners, Messrs. Thompson and Fulton, who continue to do an extensive

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business, as this is the only flouring mill in the county. We find also that during this same year a splendid brick school-house was built, which stood until 1863, when it was burned down. What a glorious hunting ground for the Indians Wright county must have been, with its beautiful lakes, streams and groves, and Doctor Cutler informs us that when he first built in 1856, in Belmond township, he could stand in his door and count as many as forty elk feeding on the prairie a short distance from his house. This township is not behind the others in having some very beautiful farms, a few of which only I can mention. Among the best are those of Henry Barker, A. Elder, W. F. Butts, James Berry, G. V. Pond, S. M. Hyndman, J. L. Morse, and the White brothers. All these have reached to such an advanced state of improvement that were we possessed with the choice of selecting one, we would be at a loss to know which to prefer. At present there are in the township three school-houses, and its population amounts to about five hundred. A description of the town of Belmond will be given in other pages of this history.

PLEASANT.

This township is situated in the north east corner of the county, its west border resting on the Iowa river.

The first settlers in this township were Henry Luick, William Gray and Anthony Overacker, who came in July, 1853, and on the 19th day of that month planted several acres of corn; and, although it may appear somewhat incredible, yielded a good crop and ripened well, there being no frost in that year until the 29th day of November, which was a great blessing to the settlers. In 1855, also came D. Luick, W. Rankin, and the White brothers, each of whom preempted land and commenced improving it. During

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the succeeding two or three years quite a large settlement came in, and emigrants continued to come slowly but regularly until the commencement of the war.

This was a serious check to emigration, and but very few settlers arrived during its existence.

About its close however, emigration received a fresh impetus, and settlers began to arrive more rapidly.

In 1864, A. Fisk and S. D. Pierce cast their lot in Pleasant township, the former locating about four miles from the village of Belmond, while the latter on his arrival bought the saw and grist mill on the Iowa, and opened up a splendid farm about half a mile east of the river, and which adjoins the town of Belmond. In connection with W. Luick he built an elegant barn on the place, of which, we will risk the assertion that a better is not in the State of Iowa. Its dimensions are 36x60, and is capable of stalling sixty head of cattle. Mr. Pierce did not come as many of the other settlers, empty handed and dependent on their willing hands, strong arms and brave hearts, to work their fortune out of the prairie, he came with a fortune already made, bringing with him upwards of one hundred head of live stock, which was quite an accession to the wealth of the township. Whoever gave this township its name must have known how to appreciate the beauties of nature, for it is one that is certainly very appropriate, as it is really a very pleasant township, containing two beautiful groves and three lovely streams. The former are named respectively Burr Oak Grove, which stands on the banks of the East Branch, about three miles north of the village of Belmond, and the latter Franklin, on the Iowa river, about three-fourths of a mile southeast of the same village. The streams are Luick,

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Janison, and Franklin, all of which empty into the Iowa. The greater portion of the farms in this township are all well improved, but that known as the Luick and Pierce farm is certainly worthy the reputation it bears as being one of the finest in all north-western Iowa. We trust, in giving this place particular attention, that it may not be considered as partiality, for it is an admitted fact that it is the best farm on the Iowa river.

For ourselves we must admit that we were struck with surprise and admiration on beholding it, for it really contains everything to make it lovely. Everything around it, barn, out-houses, stables, sheds, stock-yard, and fences, are all gotten up in the very best style. Six years ago it was nothing but prairie, but now it contains a beautiful grove of native timber which Mr. Pierce had set out on first taking possession, besides a grove of young maples, which, in the course of a few years, will add still more to its beauty. He has also appropriated a few acres to an orchard in which a great many of the trees are bearing, the whole of which is surrounded by a double row of Lombardy Poplar Trees, by which the orchard is securely sheltered from the fierce and sweeping winds of winter. Taking it for all in all we must confess it is one of the most delightful places we have seen in all our travels through this section of country. Besides this one, there are truly, other farms in this township well worthy of notice, among which, are those of D. Luick, Hathaway, A. Fisk, F. Luick, and one just being opened by G. L. Cutler, on which he is building at the present time (1870), a splendid large residence, two stories high. This township has three school-houses and a population of about four hundred and fifty. We were furnished on our tour with a little piece of history concerning one of the first settlers of this town-

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ship, which probably ought to be omitted, but owing to the strange and almost incredible transaction it reveals, we are constrained to publish, taking the responsibility however by omitting real names and putting forth the facts in our own peculiar style. The history of the circumstances we are about to write runs something in this wise:

During a certain year, there came to settle in Pleasant township, a man, whom, for convenience sake, we will call by the name of Doolittle. This is not his real name however, and if there happen to be a citizen in the township bearing such a name he will know that it is not him that is meant.

This much in way of explanation, and now to narrate what befel Mr. Doolittle. Mr. D. was one of those fortunate creatures who had the good luck to be possessed with a very charming wife.

For many years Mrs. D. had reclined on his noble bosom, and during all this time they had sailed together on the sea of wedlock, (which by the way were not a few for Mrs. D. had borne him several children one of whom was a lovely girl) calmly and peacefully she ever acting the part of a true and faithful wife. After a long and peaceful voyage, without anything transpiring to interrupt or disturb the mutual felicity that each seemed to enjoy. A breaker arose, which destroyed their happiness forever.

Convenient to where Mr. Doolittle resided lived a gentleman whom we will call Mr. Domore.

This Domore, may have been either a preacher, a teacher, or a doctor, or, he may possibly have been a—judge. From his good judgment concerning a woman's beauty we rather incline to the belief that the latter was his profession. Be this as it may, certain it is that Mr. Doolittle's wife took his eyes notwithstanding the fact of him having a wife of his own. In this

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age of Woman's Rights and Free Love, we don't know that he was much to blame, for the charms of Mrs. Doolittle were, truly irresistible. It is evident a thought of the Tenth Commandment never entered his head, or if it did, it is equally certain he utterly disregarded it, for he did covet his neighbor's wife, and the image of the lovely Mrs. Doolittle was continually before his eyes night and day. He struggled hard and long to overcome the enchanting smile and fascinating features of the charming creature who had taken possession of his soul, but all to no avail, for strive or struggle how he would he could not flee from her, and even in his sleep her image haunted him. At length his state of mind became insufferable and awaiting an opportunity when he could find his enchantress alone he rushed to her frantically, and falling on his knees and eloquently told the story of his passionate, earnest, true, deep, and burning love. No blame can be attached to the fair Mrs. Doolittle if her heart was moved by his piteous tale, for it was of such a soul-stirring nature and delivered in such a pathetic manner that stronger hearts than hers must have yielded to such an outburst of burning, passionate love.

He told her that he adored and worshipped her; his life would be nothing but a blank without her; she was the idol at whose shrine he ever knelt, and all that the infatuated Mr. Domore required to make earth a paradise was the sweet angel, Mrs. Doolittle. Needless to say such earnest pleadings completely won over the affections of Mrs. Doolittle, and throwing herself into the arms of Domore, she sobbed out "dearest, I am thine!" Arrangements for further movements were made, when Mr. Domore took his departure from the presence of his idol with a soul filled with boundless joy. All the necessary preparations being made, one beautiful morning, just as the

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sun was shedding his first beams over the mountain tops, by a preconcerted arrangement, this loving couple met, at a place by them understood and agreed upon beforehand, and after a long and loving embrace, started for Missouri; Domore leaving his wife to mourn his loss, and the charming Mrs. Doolittle leaving her husband to repine over her departure. After an absence of two years their hearts longed to return again to the place where their first love began, and agreeable to both, they came back once more to the old familiar scenes. While they were gone, however, Mr. Doolittle, feeling deeply vexed at his wife taking such a long visit without consulting him on the subject, had rushed to the court and obtained a bill of divorce. It is a mystery to us how he could have the heart to do such a thing on such a frivolous pretense. However, the absent couple returned, and no sooner had the distracted Doolittle caught Mrs. D's first smile than he ran and clasped her in his arms, and good natured soul that he was, all was forgiven on the instant. Domore, likewise, returned to the embrace of his first wife. Hearts like Domore's and the fascinating Mrs. Doolittle's, so congenial to each other, were not to be long sundered, however, and scarcely had a month expired when Domore one day, about noon, drove over to Doolittle's and taking Mrs. D. in his wagon started for parts unknown. Mrs. Domore now discovering that her lord had become estranged from her, and that she was completely banished from his affections, sought the only remedy to be had in such cases, that of being separated from him for life according to law. Pending the decree, Domore turns up once more, this time leaving his charmer in Franklin county, and scarcely had Mrs. Domore obtained the decree of separation than

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Domore returned to where his fair enchantress was, and married her.

It appears that this spirit of congeniality which existed between Domore and Mrs. Doolittle, was not confined to those two alone, but was inherited by their offspring, for we find that some time subsequent to this, Domore's son and Mrs. Doolittle's daughter became twain in one flesh, while poor Doolittle took to his bosom a new comforter, and the much wronged Mrs. Domore, forgetting all her troubles, seized upon the first opportunity that presented itself of burying all her grief by becoming the wife of some one else.

Now, gentle reader, you may be a little anxious to know what has become of the characters of this portion of my history. At the present time, from all that we can learn, Domore and Mrs. Doolittle, that was, are living in the full enjoyment of perfect bliss in some region agreeable to both; while Mr. Doolittle, after living a long time in solitude, mourning over the loss of the beautiful bird he had so long cherished and cared for, emerged from his seclusion and mated with another, with whom he now resides, in the pleasant locality of Belmond, in perfect peace and harmony. The younger Domore, with the daughter of Mrs. Doolittle, are living, in a state of uninterrupted felicity, joy, and blessedness; and the prospects are that the future generations of the Domore's and Doolittle's all around, are destined to enjoy countless years of unbroken happiness and great prosperity.

IOWA.

This is the adjoining township to Belmond on the south, and is situated on both sides of the Iowa river. The earliest settlers here were Robert Rowan and Edwin Ballou, who came in 1855. On this township being first settled it abounded in all kinds of wild

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game, which furnished the greater portion of the people's subsistence. The early settlers inform us that the nearest post office to them was at Eldora, in Hardin county, distant forty miles, and that it was quite common for them to go all the way to Davenport for groceries. One of the prominent features of this township is its beautiful groves, one of which is known as Horse Grove. This name was given to it from the fact that before a settlement was made here, a party of trappers made this their headquarters one winter, while trapping and hunting along the Iowa.

Some time previous to this a party of engineers was employed in surveying through Hardin county, when a horse belonging to Mr. Shaw, one of the party, strayed away and wandered up to this grove. All through the winter the horse kept wandering through the grove, solitary and alone, living as best he could until spring, when he died. Besides wild game, this was the only animal seen by the trappers during their encampment in the grove. And thus ever since that time the place has been known as Horse Grove. Besides this, there is also another very pretty grove, called Devota, about three miles farther north, and situated on the west side of the river. Horse Grove covers an area of about six hundred acres, and contains very excellent timber, the greater portion of which consists of burr oak, ash, elm, and basswood. There are two beautiful creeks, which take their rise in Franklin county, running through this township and emptying into the Iowa river in the vicinity of Horse Grove. For a long time after the first settlers came, immigration came in very slowly, but about 1854 it increased to a considerable extent, and at the present time, considering its short existence, the township is very fairly settled. It contains some very excellent farms, of which we would mention those of Elwin

Ballou; Rev. W. F. Harvey, who is pastor of the Congregational Church at Webster City; Bob't Duffy, L. C. Dalrymple, George Bingham, and Bob't Rowan. This latter gentleman keeps a hotel in connection with his farm at Horse Grove, on the public road leading from Iowa Falls to Belmond, where travelers may be assured of receiving good fare and excellent accommodation.

The township contains four school-houses, and the people generally are in a very prosperous condition.

WALL LAKE.

This township derives its name from a beautiful lake situated within its limits and which constitutes one of the attractive points of northwestern Iowa. Originally it formed part of Vernon township, but in 1868, by an ordinance passed by the board of supervisors, it was constituted into a separate township, to be known as Wall Lake. It is one of the southern tier of townships of the county, and with the exception of about twenty acres of timber, located on the south side of the lake, is all prairie.

The first settler in the township was Elery P. Purcell, who, as early as 1850, settled on the southeast border of the lake. But few settlers arrived until 1863, and in fact it might be said that Mr. Purcell was the only settler in the township up to that time. No new comer thought of going into the center of the county, where there was nothing but prairie, so long as land could be had along the rivers, where there was an abundance of timber; and the consequence was, that so long as land could be had along either river, the central portion of the county was left entirely in its original, primitive state. It might be expected, however, that land so desirable as that lying along the banks of the Boone and Iowa rivers would not remain

long uninhabited, and consequently we find about 1862 that the center of the county, hitherto unsought for, began to attract considerable attention from parties looking up locations in the West. Wall Lake township has received its due proportion of new comers since the centre of the county began to be settled, and at the present time, about three or four miles from the lake, is quite a heavy settlement.

There is one very plausible feature that is strikingly observable among the settlers on the prairie, and that is, that a great deal of time and attention is given to setting out groves of young trees, which in the course of a very few years will add great beauty to the county and no little amount of comfort to those who set them out. During the years 1868 and '69 immigration to this township increased at a rapid rate, of which at the present time (1870) there is no abatement, but rather still increasing. The nature of the soil is rich and fertile, and is well adapted for farming purposes of all kinds. A stream, known as the White Fox, runs through the west portion of the township, and the land in this locality stands unexcelled in this or any other county in the State. In a manner, the farms, with the exception of E. P. Purcell's, are all almost new, and of course it cannot be expected that they will present such an improved appearance as others that were opened up ten or twelve years in advance of them, but what is required to make them all that can be desired, is a little time.

Notwithstanding this township being comparatively new, compared with some others in the county, it contains a number of excellent farms, which in the course of a short time may justly be classed with the finest in the county. Of these we would mention that of R. H. Foster, J. Mann, and Mr. Nelson. Each of these have splendid houses upon them and gives

fair promise of shortly reaching a degree of perfection as will render them all that can be desired for comfort and happiness.

There are three school-houses in the township, and at present the number of voters it contains amounts to about forty-five, which according to the general average proportion of population to each voter, would give it a population of something over two hundred.

In the southwest portion of the township we observed that quite a heavy settlement was being made, and on inquiry learned that no less than nine families had settled there this spring (1870). These new settlers are opening up splendid farms and are putting up good buildings, which will add materially to the improvement of the township.

CLARION.

This township was organized in 1868, and is the central township of the county. Formerly it formed a portion of Iowa, Liberty, and Eagle Grove townships. In 1865 a vote was taken in the county on the question of removing the county seat from Liberty to a more central point, which resulted in Clarion being selected as the most suitable place, being about equidistant from both rivers, and the north and south lines of the county. In 1866, a few months after the county seat was located here, a splendid frame court-house was built in the center of the township, in what is now called the town of Clarion. When the township was first organized Wm. McCormick was about the only settler in it, he having settled on a homestead in 1863.

An incident transpired at McCormick's place in 1864, which we consider worth recording before proceeding any farther. It happened that a party of

horse thieves were going through this section of country during the summer of that year, and one evening about the commencement of twilight they found themselves in the vicinity of McCormick's place. Knowing there was no other house within miles of them, they concluded to put up here for the night; and leaving their horses, some five or six in all, in a slough, or piece of low ground, they proceeded to the house for the purpose of ascertaining if they could stop there over night. Each of them was well armed with rifle and revolver, and presented a very threatening appearance. Mr. McCormick, knowing that he was solitary and alone out on the prairie, thought discretion to be the better part of valor, and very prudently informed them they could, if they were willing to put up with such accommodations as his house afforded. This was perfectly satisfactory to the thieves, and placing their rifles carefully away where they would be within easy reach in case of emergency, they made themselves quite at home. It is nothing against Mr. McCormick's courage to say that in the presence of these three roving thieves and vagabonds he felt rather shaky in the knees, for in the situation in which he was placed, who would not be.

Late in the evening a party passed that way, going to Liberty, the county seat at that time, and Mr. McCormick's suspicions being aroused, and his fears being intense, he very adroitly managed to send word to the sheriff, O. C. McIntosh, that a party of horse thieves were at his house. Like a faithful official, on receiving this information, Mr. McIntosh lost no time in collecting six men, and starting off in pursuit of the thieves. It was about three o'clock in the morning when the sheriff with his posse arrived at McCormick's, passing on the way the horses that the thieves had lariatted for the night.

On the sheriff entering, he inquired as to whom the horses belonged that were tied down in the slough, whereupon the three thieves simultaneously seized their rifles as if they meant to do some execution.

On seeing this the sheriff immediately withdrew and informed his squad that the thieves intended to show fight. Scarcely however had he imparted this information, when the thieves, firing through the door, succeeded in inflicting a dangerous wound upon the person of Robert A. Donaldson, one of the sheriff's party, the ball penetrating his lungs, and passing clear through his body. Donaldson fell dangerously wounded, and the remainder of the party withdrew for consultation. On perceiving this, the thieves emerged from the house, fired another volley, by which John Melrose was slightly wounded in the neck, then hastening to where the horses were, speedily mounted one each, and starting off at full speed, succeeded in making good their escape, leaving two horses behind, which, after remaining unclaimed for a considerable length of time, were sold, the school fund deriving the benefit of the proceeds of the sale. Notwithstanding Donaldson being shot clear through the lungs, by which he received a wound that was considered mortal, he nevertheless survived, and is at the time of writing this short history, both healthy and strong.

After Clarion became a township, the first settlers that came to it were R. K. Eastman and family with George McKay and his family, both families coming at the same time.

R. K. Eastman was then county treasurer, and George McKay county clerk. The year of their advent to Clarion was 1866, shortly after the completion of the court-house in which they took up their quarters during the winter of 1866-7. The fact of the

county seat being in this township has been quite an incentive to emigration, and during the years 1868-9, settlers came in very rapidly. The sun never shone upon more beautiful land than the prairie of Wright county, and that of Clarion township is certainly among the best. It is truly beautiful, being neither too flat nor too rolling, while its soil is of the very richest kind. Notwithstanding two years having scarcely passed since its first organization as a township, it shows a degree of prosperity that speaks well for its inhabitants. Adjoining the town of Clarion, or Grant, as it was formerly called, George McKay has a splendid farm, nearly a hundred acres of which is under the highest state of cultivation.

D. Leonard also has a good farm close to town, while William McCormick, from his sixteen years' residence in the place, has his farm improved in the first order; a beautiful grove which he set out himself a number of years ago, adds greatly to its beauty.

Samuel Overacker and W. Pearl likewise have farms that are fast approaching a point of perfection, and which at present possess every appearance of rendering the owners extremely comfortable. Last, but not least, is the farm of W. B. York, which is situated on the south-west bank of Elm Lake, a beautiful body of water, about two miles long and from a half to a mile wide.

A finer location for a farm we never saw, and from the nature of the improvements being made we should judge it is the owner's intention to make it one of the attractive points of Wright county. Situated, as it is, on the bank of a beautiful lake, it offers pleasures, such as boating, fishing, gunning, and bathing, which are to be realized by but few. These, in connection with the amount of young trees set out by Mr. York,

are distinct to render it one of the most desirable places in the county. In addition to the splendid school-house just completed in the town of Clarion (June, 1870), the township has two others, both of which are well attended. There is but one stream in the township, the White Fox, which enters on the east side and leaves on the west, and which is well supplied with water the whole year round. There is one more feature about this township which, were its origination known, would doubtless occupy a conspicuous place in the pages of the history of Wright county; but, as it stands to-day it is a matter of conjecture as to how or when it was originally formed or to the importance to be attached to its history. The spot of which we are speaking, is known among the inhabitants as the "Indian battle ground," and is situated on an elevated portion of the prairie about one mile northeast of the town of Clarion, and consists of what appears to have been at some period of the world's history, some sort of defensive works. We arrive at this conclusion from the present appearance that the place exhibits, although how near we are to being correct we are not prepared to say. These works, if they may be so called, assume somewhat the shape of a horse shoe and consist of a number of pits about five feet wide by ten feet long, and varying in depth from two to four feet, although when first made, they were, in all probability, much deeper. At the south-west end there is an opening of much wider space than exists at any other point in the chain of pits, and which probably was used as a means of entrance and exit, to and from. That it has been once used by some people and for some purpose is very evident, for in the vicinity is a large heap of bones of various animals, of which, in all probability not a few may be human.

This, however, is only conjecture, as we could find no person who could furnish us with any information touching upon how these bones had accumulated at this point, and as our knowledge is not sufficient to fathom the mystery, we herewith discontinue any further surmisings.

WOOLSTOCK.

This township was organized in the fall of '68, and formerly constituted the east half of Troy.

It adjoins Hamilton county on the north, and has two very beautiful streams running through it. Eagle Creek on the west and White Fox on the east, both of which empty into the Boone in the vicinity of Webster City. Along the banks of Eagle Creek as far north as G. Perry's, which is distant from Webster City about fourteen miles, are very heavy bodies of excellent timber, which alone, irrespective of that on the two rivers, is sufficient to supply the county with fuel for many years to come. The first settlers in the township were G. Perry, J. Boring, and R. Brewer, who came in '58, and shortly after, D. F. McDaniels and L. P. Metz came. All of these at the present time are comfortably situated on well improved farms, while those of Ed Allen, B. F. Waterman, and Barnard, indicate that prosperity has not passed their doors without leaving them a goodly share of its blessings. It is generally conceded that the land in this township is about as good as can be found in any State or county, and we observed in our tour around the county that the people everywhere spoke in the highest terms of the land on the White Fox. It is, unquestionably, well worthy all the praise that can be bestowed upon it, for the sun never shone on finer soil. All the people of this town-hip appear to be in a very flourishing condition, and wherever one may

go he will find the hand of industry plainly visible. Nor have they been negligent in regard to fruit trees, for we have discovered these have been planted very extensively. There are school-houses in the township which afford ample facilities for the education of the youth, to which, above all things, western people pay particular attention.

Mr. Demming's farm on which Mr. Waterman lives, is one of the finest in the county, containing in all 640 acres, 380 of which is well fenced, and 160 in a state of cultivation. To Mr. Waterman belongs the credit of making it what it is so far as the work on improvement is concerned, although Mr. Demming, who resides in Connecticut, unlike many other eastern men who have large tracts of lands in the west, still in its primitive state, pays for all the improvements made on the place.

There is a splendid house on the farm, a good granary, a large stable with stalls for fifty head of cattle, of which, Waterman has at the present time sixty head of as fine stock as can be found anywhere. To his other buildings he has recently added a cheese-house, where he has commenced the manufacture of this article. He has also set out on the place twenty thousand young maple trees besides a large quantity of Lombardy poplars, and a number of young pine and European larch; and all this work, building, breaking, fencing, and planting has been done in the short period of three years.

A few such settlers as this would soon render Woolstock township a perfect Eden of loveliness.

This farm of Mr. Demming's, with Mr. Barnard's that adjoins it, and which in the line of improvement may be placed among the best in the county, constitute the most beautiful tract of land that eyes ever rested upon. Both farms are watered by the White Fox, an

excellent and ever living stream, the proper source of which may justly be attributed to a cluster of large and beautiful springs located on its banks about two miles north of Mr. Waterman's.

These we say constitute the head proper, although the stream extends many miles further north, for the streams that flow from these springs supply the main stream below, with a supply of ever living water, while above it very often becomes dry. Take Woolstock for all in all and for land it is difficult to find a better.

VERNON.

Last but not least in the mention of townships comes Vernon. In addition to its present size it formerly contained what is now Wall Lake township.

Its soil, beyond contradiction, may be classed among the best in the county. A few miles below the village of Freyburgh, the Iowa river enters this township and flows in an oblique direction through the northeast corner for a distance of several miles, when it leaves the county entirely, and enters Franklin county. Here it forms a large curve or bend, re-entering Wright county two or three miles further south, in the vicinity of Otisville, thence for several miles it runs due south, when it once more enters Franklin at the southeast corner of Vernon township, here bidding a final adieu to Wright county, to wind its circuitous way in a southeasterly direction, till it finally mixes its waters with those of the mighty Mississippi. Nature has dealt very bountifully with this township and adorned it with great beauty. The banks of the river are covered with good timber; and its prairie, for beauty and fertility of soil, is all that can be desired. According to the statement of the state geologist, this township contains about fifty acres of the

finest peat in the world, averaging from six to eight feet deep, which in itself constitutes a mine of inestimable wealth. Nor yet are the farmers of this township behind those of their fellow settlers in other townships in the line of improvements, for in making a circuit of its extent we found some very excellent farms, of which we would mention those of D. N. Inman, C. P. Sheldon, H. B. Peterson, while there are others equally worthy of mention, but to name them all is unnecessary.

There are two school-houses in the township, and the indications are that as soon as its extensive peat beds are opened up, which we are led to believe is to be done shortly, emigration will come in very rapidly. Like other townships, all that Vernon requires to develop her resources is, good industrious settlers, who, knowing how to work, are not afraid to do it, and in a short time with the work already done by nature it would constitute a most desirable place for man to dwell. At present, emigration is coming in rather slow to this section, but it matters not how slow it may be just now, the time is not far distant when every vacant acre now in the township of Vernon will be occupied.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTY.

Having thus far given our time to the description of townships, we will now briefly dwell upon the appearance of the county in general, with a few of its most attractive and interesting features. The reader who has perused the preceding pages does not require to be told that for richness of soil, salubrity of climate, healthy atmosphere and natural beauty, Wright county is hard to excel. Take it as it stands to-day, and it presents a grand panorama of nature, that is extremely fascinating and picturesque.

Its east and west borders are washed by the waters of the beautiful Boone and delightful Iowa rivers, along whose banks are some of as lovely groves as ever the hand of nature planted, while its center is one of grand and undulating prairie interspersed with most beautiful lakes, which in themselves have a just claim to a separate page in the history of the county.

LAKES.

The first of these of which we will speak is Lake Gertrude, name as such by Mr. White the State Geologist, and which is located in Belmond township. It is about two miles long by a half to three-fourths of a mile wide, and to say that it is altogether lovely, conveys but a poor idea of its great beauty. Next to this and separated from it by a narrow ridge or wall about ten feet wide, and which consists of gravel and boulders, is a lesser lake which having no name, we will, by permission of the people of Wright county, call Lake Ida. These two lakes are called by some, the "Twin Sisters." If this name has been given by some of the early settlers on account of the respective beauty of each, then they are well called, for in regard to this feature it is difficult to find the distinguishing mark. Near to the west end of the ridge that divides these two lakes is an outlet from Lake Gertrude to Lake Ida, the surface of the former being about five feet higher than that of the latter. Viewing these lakes from the ridge they present a picture that is truly beautiful. A few miles from Lake Ida, to the south, is Lake Cornelia, named in respect after Miss Cornelia Eastman, of Clarion, one of the many fair daughters of which Wright county may well be proud. This lake is known to a great many as Little Wall Lake, from the fact that there is a regular wall around it

composed of large stones and earth, but whether this wall is a work of nature or of art it is difficult to decide.

Formerly it must have been a place of great beauty, but some people who must have been dead to the admiration of the picturesque and lovely, have greatly disfigured it by cutting down the timber. It is, nevertheless, a lake possessed of considerable beauty and attraction and will amply repay any person that visits it. It is about a mile and a half long and from half a mile to a mile wide, and extending from its west bank is a beautiful hill from which, owing to its altitude, a person can see over the entire extent of the county.

A little farther south is Elm Lake, the name of which is derived from a large stately elm tree that stands solitary and alone on its south-east border. This lone tree, looming up as it does by itself in the center of the prairie, can be seen by the traveler while yet a long way off, while at the same time it serves as a sign post to indicate the locality of the lake. The length of the lake is much greater than its width, but we should judge that its surface might cover an area of between a mile and two miles square. The water it contains is very clear, and its greatest depth is fifteen feet, although from information received from the settlers we are led to believe it is often very much deeper. This lake is in Clarion township, while Cornelia and Gertrude, are in Belmond.

Between Cornelia and Elm there are two very beautiful lesser lakes, one known as Round Lake, while the other we will call Lake Mary. All these being so closely together for a beautiful cluster, and to a person standing on an eminence a short way off, they present one of the grandest pictures conceivable.

About ten miles south of Elm Lake is what is known as "Big Wall Lake," in Wall Lake township. This is the largest lake in the county and covers a surface of probably three miles long by one and a half to two miles wide.

The name it bears will indicate to the reader how, and from what it was derived.

It was named Wall Lake from the fact of their being a wall nearly all around it. This wall is composed of earth and large boulders, and in the course of our travels we have heard a great many opinions expressed as to this wall was formed. Some attribute the construction of it to nature, some to art, but all opinions expressed on this subject are mere conjectures. Its uniformity of construction and material would lead to the belief that it is a work of art, but there are other features about it that completely explode this belief.

This lake is located out on the prairie, about or nearly equi-distant from both rivers, and if this wall is a work of art, the question is, where were the large boulders had, and by what means were they transported to this locality for its construction. If, however, it can be proven to be a work of art its antiquity must be great as indicated by the huge trees, growing, as it were, from its very base. Whether it be of nature or art, however, it is to the present generation a great mystery, the solution of which is never likely to be made known. On the south bank of the lake stands a beautiful grove which covers about eighteen acres of ground, while along its eastern border is a kind of thicket composed of brush and young trees, besides a great many large stumps averaging from one to three feet in diameter, showing clearly that prior to the introduction of the axe it must have been a place of great beauty. All these lakes have beautiful sand and gravel beaches and are capable of

being made watering places of great resort. The visitor who is in search of recreation, sport, and pleasure, will find them excellent places for boating, gunning, fishing, and other recreative pastimes. Following these lakes from Lake Gertrude in Belmond township, to the north, to Wall Lake in the south, and they constitute, in connection with the beautiful country that surrounds them, one of the most charming pictures that man can contemplate. It would appear that nature had selected this spot above all others for the purpose of displaying her greatest handiwork; for every hill and vale in the vicinity of these lakes is deeply impressed with the beauty and loveliness that can only come from the hand of Him who pronounced all the work he performed—good, and which, on beholding, fills the heart of man with commingled feelings of wonder and admiration.

TOWNS.

There are three places in Wright county which properly may be called towns, the first of which we will write, being—

LIBERTY.

This town was laid out in 1855, by Major Brassfield and his brother A. D. Brassfield, the latter gentleman building the first house on the town site. A short time after however, John Melrose arrived and built a store in which he commenced business as a general dealer in dry goods, groceries, etc. From all we can learn, this gentleman was the first merchant in the county, and is, at the present time still engaged in mercantile pursuits in the same building where he first started.

O. W. McIntosh and Wellington Niece were among

the first who built and settled in Liberty, and in a very short time after the place was first laid out, it began to assume the appearance of quite a thriving little village. On the county being organized this was selected as the county seat, and the first court held in the county, convened here in May, 1858, with Judge A. D. Thompson of Eldora, presiding.

During this year a splendid two-story building was erected for a court-house, for which purpose it was used until 1865, when the county seat was removed to Clarion. Three years subsequent to the removal of the county seat the building that had been erected as a court-house was sold to J. W. Parmalee, who converted it into a splendid store, in which he continues to carry on a thriving trade in a general business line. For several years the town has been almost at a stand still, and but very little improvement has been made, although the country surrounding it has improved at a very rapid rate.

The first marriage celebrated in Wright county was that of Alexander Usher and Lucy Ann Brassfield, who were married by Judge Dean on the twenty-seventh day of December, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-five.

The removal of the county seat to Clarion, which took place in 1866, had a tendency to somewhat hurt the business of Liberty, but being surrounded by a beautiful and well settled country, it yet carries on a good trade. The town contains at present two stores, one hotel, one physician, one steam mill, one blacksmith shop, and a population of about one hundred or may be more. It is beautifully located, and if certain railroad measures are carried through, now being talked of, Liberty will yet be a town of considerable importance.

BELMOND.

This town is situated on the Iowa river, a portion of it being built on either bank. It was laid out in the summer of 1857, by A. Dumond, E. Rogers and J. Elder.

The town originally bore the name of Crown Point, and to this day it is thus shown on some of the maps. Shortly after its origination, however, it was proposed to change it to the name of Dumond in honor of the first settler and originator of the town. To this proposition Mr. Dumond, being a very unostentatious gentleman, strongly demurred, when it was finally agreed to give it the beautiful name it now bears—Belmond. The first frame house put up in town, and in fact in the township, was built in 1856, by Dr. L. H. Cutler. In 1856 also, the Doctor, in company with A Dumond, built a flouring and saw mill, but unfortunately during the same year, it was washed away by a flood.

The following year the doctor erected a steam mill, but it had been in operation but a short time when he sold the machinery, which the purchaser shortly afterward removed to Kansas. It was likewise in this year that the first school-house was built, and about the same time the Western Hotel was erected by O. Hunt. While these improvements were being made, A Dumond was busily engaged in putting up a splendid brick residence on the west side of the river. In 1858, Dr. Cutler built a store on the east side of the river, in which he carried on the combined business of dealer in dry goods, grocery, and drugs. The Belmond House was built on the east side of the river during this year by L. L. Loomis, which added considerably to the appearance of the town.

From this time to the end of the war improvements were made rather slowly, although a great improvement was made in '64 by S. D. Pierce building a magnificent store, in which he still carries on an extensive business, consisting of dry goods, boots and shoes, hats and caps, Queensware, hardware, and millinery goods. As time wore on, the business of the place increased, and soon after we find a boot and shoe manufacturer, a harness maker, and a tinsmith, each starting upon his respective line of business, in the town of Belmond.

In 1869 we again find that S. D. Pierce erected a splendid residence convenient to his store, which helped the looks of the village materially.

At the present time (June, 1870), the improvements that are being made are great, and shows that the people of Belmond are possessed with that energetic, enterprising spirit so characteristic of many of our western men. The nature of these improvements are such as will render the village one of considerable importance, and if carried on a year or two longer will make it a dangerous rival of Alden and Iowa Falls, (two towns situated about thirty and thirty-five miles respectively farther down the river) they consist of a splendid large residence which G. L. Cutler is putting up, another by P. J. Lathrup, and a large store with public hall above, by Dr. L. H. Cutler. Besides these, Pierce and Goulding have just built and put into operation a splendid cheese factory, in which, although just opened, has manufactured one hundred and fifty pounds of cheese daily. The prospects of Belmond are certainly very cheering for the future.

It contains at the present time, two hotels, three stores, one grist and saw mill, one cheese factory, two blacksmith's shops, one harness maker, one boot and shoe maker, two practising physicians, one attorney,

one tinsmith, one wagon shop, one paint shop, one carpenter's shop, and one agricultural warehouse.

Religious services are held here every Sabbath, besides there is a strong Sabbath School organization.

There is also a good Masonic Lodge here and a Good Templar's Lodge, the numbers of each being numerically strong. About a mile or so to the south-east of town is a beautiful cemetery around which, the ladies of the place, by free and liberal contributions, paid for putting up an elegant fence and setting out some beautiful shade trees. This act itself is worthy the highest praise and commendation, and speaks stronger in honor of these noble women than could the tongues of ten thousand orators. The dead! The person that would refuse to put forth a helping hand to render their resting place hallowed and sacred, must be void of every feeling of sympathy and humanity. And yet how often do we see on our travels such places desecrated and despoiled; the graves covered over with rank weeds, instead of roses, and nothing to mark the resting place of those that are gone but a little rising mound, or probably a thrown down tombstone. Nothing to tell the stranger that it is a hallowed, sacred spot; nothing to point out to the returned wanderer the last resting place on earth of, may be, some aged and affectionate mother or loving father, kind brother, or devoted sister. This, almost, is too often the case, but all honor to the ladies of Belmond, the place where sleep those of their town who will wake no more until the sound of the last trump, is adorned and protected in such a manner that the stranger, on beholding it, exclaims, this is a hallowed spot—the sanctuary of the dead!

At Belmond a bridge used to span the Iowa river, but on the ice going out in the spring of 1870 it was

carried away, from which sprung a lamentable occurrence, and which causes now to be written the saddest page in all the history of Wright county.

At the east end of the bridge, or rather where it stood, is the Belmond mills, consequently the mill-dam was a very short distance above the bridge.

Shortly after the bridge being carried away by the ice, a party of five men undertook to cross from the west to the east side of the river in a boat, in the vicinity of the dam, but who, when once embarked, were destined to never set foot on land again. The particulars of this most sad event, so far as we could learn, were about as follows: On the afternoon of Saturday, the 9th of April, 1870, William Rowen, George W. Royce, and Dudley Gillman, of Belmond, in company with R. P. Rowley of Horse Grove, and S. F. Ainsley of Clarion, ventured to take passage across the river in a boat that had been used for the same purpose by other parties. If we are correctly informed, they made the venture with no other propelling power than a pole, and to this may be attributed the sad result that followed. As already intimated, the point of embarkation was but a short distance from the dam, and much nearer the dangerous eddy than they had thought of. Before they had reached half-way across the river they discovered to their great dismay that the boat was being fast drawn into the whirlpool or chasm caused by the great rush of water flowing over the dam, and which seethed and frothed in all its fury when it came in contact with the water below. Every effort was put forth to avoid the threatened danger, every nerve was strained to steer the boat clear of the yawning gulf; but all in vain. Out on the deep water they discover that the pole on which they depended to guide themselves across, is too short to reach the bottom, and each moment draws

them nearer and nearer the fearful doom that awaited them. Terror stricken the people on shore beheld their terrible situation, and every effort that human aid could invent whereby they might be saved was put forth, but all to no purpose. The surging and turbulent water roared loud its defiance, and seemed to claim them as its victims. Finding every effort fruitless to avoid the impending doom that too surely awaited them, one of the five, William Rowen, jumped from the boat as a last resort. Fatal leap! for no sooner had he touched the water than he was drawn beneath the surface and borne away beneath the waves out of sight. On seeing him take the leap one wild cry arose from the spectators, who, however willing, were unable to extend any aid to avert his lamentable fate.

Scarcely had the form of Mr. Rowen disappeared beneath the waves, than the treacherous boat capsized, and the other four occupants were precipitated into the boiling, seething flood. One wild and heart-rending shriek from the lookers on burst upon the air, which terminated in one long continued wail of grief. Gloom sat depicted on every countenance, and the women gave way to paroxysms of utter and wild despair.

All was now bustle and confusion. Men ran frantically to and fro in quest of something to go in search of the bodies, while the women gathered in groups, and midst ringing of hands and lamentations of woe, mingled their tears of grief together, as they gushed forth in an irresistible stream of sorrow. On the necessary preparations being made, search was immediately instituted to recover the bodies, and that same evening those of Mr. Rowan and Mr. Gillman were found about a quarter of a mile below the scene of the disaster.

A few days after, two more were recovered, but notwithstanding constant search being made day and night, a week nearly elapsed before the body of the fifth was found. This sad catastrophe threw the whole community into the deepest state of gloom, and in fact on the painful news being sent abroad, the entire people of Wright and adjoining counties received a severe shock; for the victims of this appalling calamity were well known far from home, as being industrious, energetic, and enterprising men.

To add still more to this deplorable accident, each of the five left families seemed to mourn their untimely end. It was a long time before the people of Belmont recovered from the terrible shock received by this disastrous event; and while yet in the depth of grief over the loss of five of their neighbors, a sixth was added to the list in the person of Mr. Fulton, who, a week or so after, was caught in the machinery of the mill, and crushed and mangaged to death.

These two sad calamities, following each other so closely, brought sadness and sorrow around every hearth throughout the whole community. Death—however gently and silently it comes to claim its victim, when it steals over the form of the innocent child, sleeping in its cradle, to waft it away to mingle its sweet plaintive voice, with those sweet little seraphs and cherubs around the throne of grace; or when it creeps slowly but surely on, summoning the aged and way-worn pilgrim to that longed-for abode of rest: the grave, where all earthly toils and troubles cease; or it matters not in what form it comes, however mild—is sure to cast a shadow over the soul, and cause a shudder to creep through the heart; but when it comes shrivelled in a terrible cloud of wrath, either in the surging flood, or the devouring flame, sweeping with one fell stroke six of our immediate

friends and neighbors from our very midst, whom but an hour before commingled with us full of life, strength, youth and vigor, then indeed Death is terrible and gives rise to serious contemplation. But consoling thought! let it come in whatever form it may, let it pluck the lisping infant from the arms of its mother, the wife from the fond embrace of the husband, the mother from her child, the husband from the smiles of his wife; yes, it may sever every fond and tender tie that binds heart to heart, here on earth, yet, beyond the grave its power is lost; and though it may separate us here below, it is but opening the portals through which we enter into those blissful realms where pain or sorrow never comes, and when once we meet we part no more. Consoling thought—sweet meditation—blissful hope! we shall meet again beyond the grave.

CLARION.

This is the county seat and is situated as near as possible to the geographical center of the county. Up to 1865, Liberty was the county seat, but in the fall of that year an election was held for its removal, which resulted in its being moved to its present location. Prior to this, considerable contention existed between the settlers on the Boone and those on the Iowa rivers; the latter contending that the county seat being located on the extreme west of the county, was the cause of great inconvenience to the settlers on the eastern border, which in our opinion, was a very plausible argument in favor of its removal. Its present location seems to give general satisfaction to all parties, and thus ended all contentions about the county seat.

On the removal being effected, the county purchased one hundred and twenty acres of land as the new site for the county seat. The following year, '66, the

contract for building a Court House was let to G. Perry, who immediately set to work and had it completed by fall. It is a very nice building, masterly constructed, and commodious.

The first settlers who came to this new town, which was then named Grant, were R. K. Eastman and G. A. McKay, with their families.

The former at that time was treasurer and recorder, and the latter county clerk.

These two gentlemen with their families resided in the Court-House during the winter of '66-7; but in the spring of the latter year, Mr. McKay had erected a very fine residence, this being the first of the kind built in town. In '68, R. K. Eastman built a splendid large two-story house for a dwelling, which may be classed among the finest in the county.

It need scarcely be told that on Clarion being made the county seat, it became the objective point for many new settlers. As a matter of course, there must be a hotel, and great inducements were offered to any man who would come in and erect a good one.

The liberal offer extended by the public to aid in this enterprise was accepted by Mr. J. C. Young, who in 1869, built a very fine house; but owing to the exceedingly wet season and the great distance he had to haul his building material, was unable to finish it inside before winter set in. As yet it is not quite finished but when done it will be a very fine building. While Mr. Young was engaged in putting up his hotel, Mr. Oakley, Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Rowen were busily employed in erecting very comfortable residences. In March of the same year, the "Wright County Monitor" was established, edited by W. Smith, but which in the March following, passed into the hands of A. M. White, by whom it is still published. It is a very

well conducted county paper and displays considerable talent and ability in its columns. We observed on our tour around the county, while stopping at Clarion, that great improvements were being made at this point.

We observed that W. W. Gates, the county treasurer, had just finished a residence of the first class order; and L. P. Davis, the county clerk, was fast completing another, which, irrespective of the beauty it adds to the town, is quite an ornament in itself. Mr. C. Seaman, who came with his family to settle in Clarion, last fall (1869), was likewise engaged in finishing a very fine residence; while Mr. White, editor of the *Monitor*, was just about setting men to work to build a new printing office, he having the material on the ground for this purpose. In addition to these individual improvements, a large public school-house was fast approaching completion, under the superintendence of G. Perry, formerly school commissioner for the county. As yet, Clarion is without a store of any kind, but a better opening never presented itself to some enterprising man. The place, from the fact of it being the county seat, together with its location and surroundings, is destined to be at no distant day a town of more than ordinary importance. Notwithstanding its short existence of three years, it presents a much finer appearance at the present time than many older towns.

The liberal inducements offered to new settlers coming in, must in a short time greatly increase its population and size. Although as yet without a church edifice, religious services are held every alternate Sunday; and besides, there is a large and well-conducted sabbath school organization in the place, of which Mr. Oakley is superintendent. It is really astonishing to remain in the court-house for one day

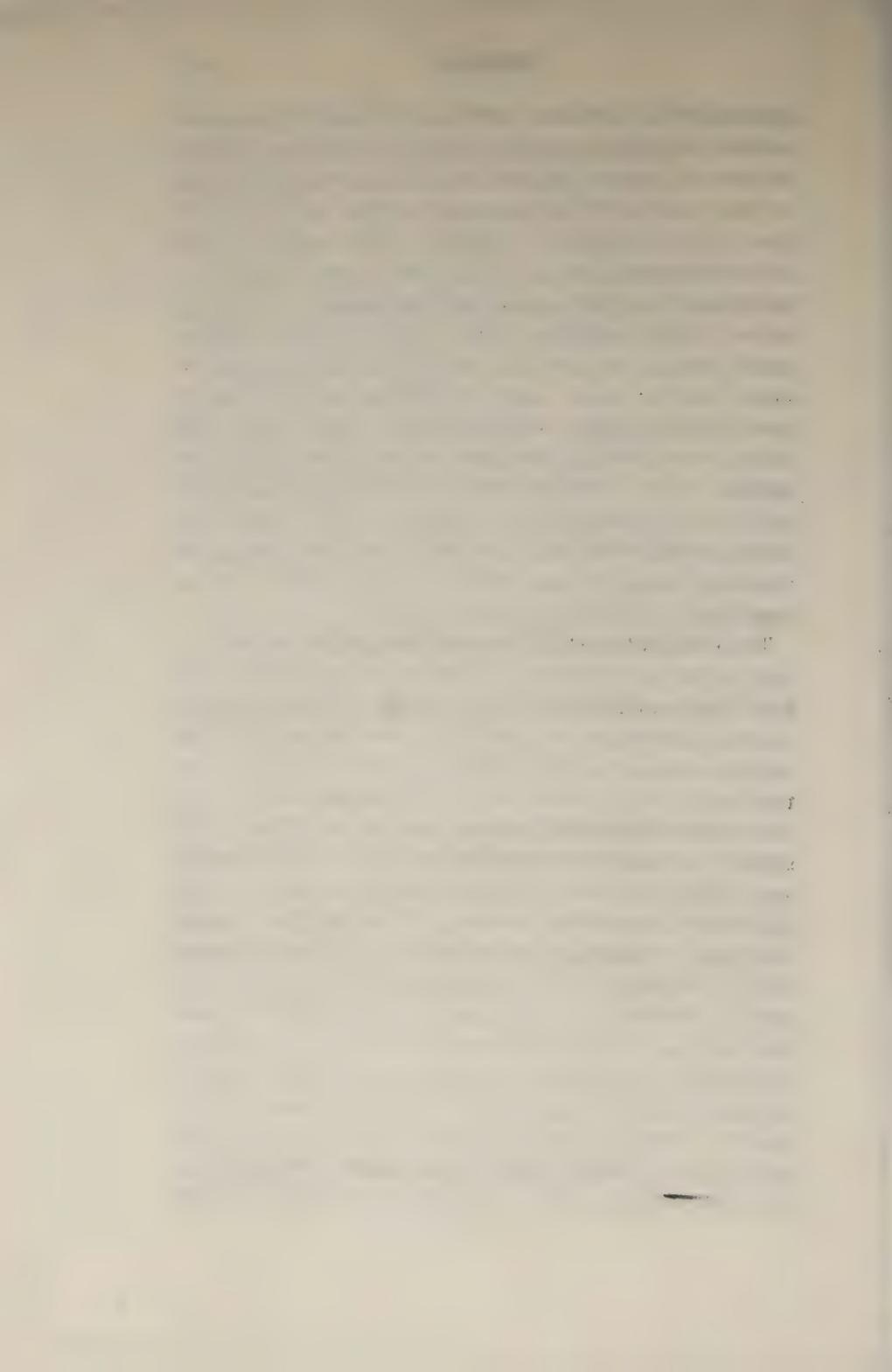
and see the amount of business transacted by the county officers, and the vast pile of letters each receive daily, all making inquiries concerning the land of Wright county, and asking for descriptions of the same, which clearly proves that people abroad are becoming interested in this fertile and beautiful county.

CLIMATE AND SOIL.

As the location of the county has been already described in the first pages of this book, all that remains to be done now, is to dwell for a short time on its general appearance, while describing its many natural advantages. The climate of Wright county is one of the most healthy to be found in any country. The air is pure and invigorating, and a number of persons, who in other States enjoyed but middling health, have since their settlement in the county been restored to all their pristine health and vigor. This feature in itself is one that commends itself to all those seeking homes in the West; for it matters not though we dwelt in a land surrounded with all the luxuries imaginable, and possessed with all the wealth we could command, if our health is poor what enjoyment can we have. This is the first and great desideratum to be sought by all; and this greatest of all blessings, to a great extent, Wright county offers to all those who settle within its borders. Its soil is of the richest and most fertile nature, and is in all respects well adapted to farming and fruit raising purposes. It is beautifully and well watered, and it matters not however dry the season may be, all artificial irrigation is rendered unnecessary, as the numerous creeks, streams, and lakes it contains are all sufficient, and at all times, to keep the soil in a good working condition. For stock-raising purposes it is unexcelled, more

especially the northern portion of it, and the greatest wonder is that people who confine themselves to this business in particular, and make a specialty of it, do not lay hold of the great opportunities presented to them by this section of country. The pasture fields of the northern portion of Wright county, with their nutritious blue-joint grass, their streams of ever living water, their sheltering hills and beautiful valleys, equal those of any other State in the Union, north or south, east or west. And we think we may safely assert that the time will yet come when they will bring more wealth into the county than any other portion of it. While this is so with the northern portion of the county, the southern part on the other hand, contains the most productive soil, and we question very much if that along the White Fox can be equalled anywhere or in any country.

The east and west portions of the county also contain land of the first quality, besides an abundance of elegant timber which will serve as fuel for untold generations yet to come; while the center of the county from north to south, and from the Iowa river on the east to the Boone on the west, is one grand and magnificent panorama of beautiful prairie, the beauty of which is greatly increased by a number of lovely lakes that lie sparkling in all their grandeur and loveliness at irregular intervals over its surface. This prairie, though destitute of timber, contains beneath its surface treasures of wealth in the shape of peat of the finest quality; and in addition to the vast beds spoken of by the State Geologist as lying in Vernon township, we have been informed since commencing this work that another extensive bed of this valuable article has been discovered in Clarion township, within a mile or two of the county seat. In addition to the rivers already mentioned, there is another very fine stream in the western



portion of the county known as Eagle Creek, on the banks of which are heavy bodies of timber, while the land in its vicinity is equally good with any other portion of the county. Taking the county for all in all, with its rivers, streams, creeks, lakes, timber, prairie, climate, soil, and other advantages, and it stands second to none in the State. If all the natural advantages that a country can possess are incentives to emigration, then Wright county stands out pre-eminently to all those who think of locating in the west, and offers inducements not to be found elsewhere.

We will now take a few statistics from the census report of 1869, to show how Wright county is advancing in the march of progression. In examining these returns we find that the first population returned for Wright county was in 1856, and amounted to 427; in 1859, 632; in 1860, 652; in 1863, 693; in 1865, 908; in 1867, 1332; in 1869, 1765, while according to the United States census taken in 1870, it amounts to 2,400, and the number of dwelling houses amount to 442, showing a very large increase in both during the last two years.

By the same returns we learn that the number of acres of land inclosed and in cultivation were as follows: Acres inclosed, 11,740; under cultivation, 8,992. Number of rods of hedging planted, 2,233; fruit trees in bearing, 718; not in bearing, 2,547; grape vines in bearing, 1,074; not in bearing, 260. Horses of all ages, 945; cattle of all ages, 2,498; hogs of all ages, 1,092; sheep of all ages, 1,218; mules and asses of all ages, 7; milch cows 840; work oxen, 149; hives of bees, 23.

We also find by the census of 1869 that the number of bushels of wheat raised in the county in 1868 was 47,435; bushels of corn, 107,430; oats, 47,118; buckwheat, 70; barley, 780; potatoes, 16,656; clover seed,

190; gallons of syrup from sorgum, 8,899. Pounds of honey made during the same year amounted to 305; butter, 53,824; cheese, 7,600; wool shorn, 2,520; tons of hay from tame grass, 15; from wild grass, 7,178. The total value of farm produce raised during the year amounted to \$124,032; value of stock sold, \$20,749; value of agricultural implements, machinery, and wagons, \$28,422; value of manufactures, \$5,240.

According to the same report we also find that the number of dwelling houses in the county in 1867 numbered 231; in 1869, 331. Number of acres of land inclosed in 1867 was 6,832; in 1869, 11,740. Number of acres of land assessed in 1867, 346,634; in 1869, 352,471. The assessed value of land per acre was \$2.72 in 1869, and the assessed value of lands and town lots was \$966,626, while that of personal property amounted to \$74,161, the total assessed valuation being \$1,040,787. The amount of State tax paid by the county at two mills on the dollar was \$2,081.57.

In looking over table VII of the Census Returns for 1869, we discover that the average yield per acre of certain agricultural products in Wright county, during 1868, was as follows: Bushels of wheat, 15.09; oats, 41.47; corn, 40.30; barley, 15.30; potatoes, 111.00; gallons of sorghum, 162.30; pounds of wool per sheep, 3.70.

This we consider a very favorable showing for such a young county as Wright, and at the rate it has improved during the last year, we may safely conclude that it is destined to become one of the most flourishing counties in what is yet going to be one of first States in the Union—Iowa.

EDUCATIONAL.

The facilities that the county contains for the education of the youth are ample and all-sufficient, and afford

every opportunity for parents to have their children well educated. There are at present no less than thirty-four school-houses in the county, and no teacher is employed who cannot satisfactorily pass through the most rigid examination. We know that it is a prevailing opinion with many of our Eastern friends, that children way out west are brought up in a blessed state of ignorance, and are altogether beyond the pale of civilization. Such is far from being the case; for if there is anything to which western people pay especial attention it is in having their children educated. One of the features of the glorious State of Iowa is her excellent system of free schools, which is fully appreciated by the people.

True, the people of the West are not so particular about having their sons and daughters taught all the *accomplishments* which young folks East think they must acquire to fit them for society, and which, in too many cases *unfits* them for anything else other than to lounge in ease and idleness. During our short experience in the West, we have discovered that all the knowledge and wisdom of the country is not confined to the people of the East by any means, and in no place is this more strikingly shown than in Wright county. It is really astonishing to see how readily boys, scarcely ten years old, will solve the most difficult problems in arithmetic; and the most complicated problem in algebra is to them as easy of solution as the simplest in simple addition. Nor is their learning confined to the study of grammar, geography, and arithmetic alone, they are taught to guide the plow, drive the plane, or shape the heated iron into useful tools and implements.

They are also taught to experience what real life is, so that in future years, in prosperity or adversity, they will be prepared for any vicissitude that may

take place, or any emergency that may come upon them.

No, no, dear eastern friends, the youth of the West are not raised in that half savage state in which ye suppose they are; and by paying us a visit you will find that literature, and the arts and sciences are not ignored, while morally, religiously, and educationally the Western people rather excel those of the East. In summing up the total number of schools in Wright county, we find that they amount to thirty-four, which, in proportion to the number of inhabitants it contains, offers equal facilities for educating the youth with any other county in the State.

CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE.

The greater portion of the population are from the Eastern and Middle States, although for the past year or two quite an emigration has been received from the adjoining States of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois. Good morals, industry, and perseverance are strong characteristics of the people, and the principles of justice and right govern all their actions in their mutual dealings with each other. They are quiet and peaceable, and avoid all quarrelling and feuds; in fact, this is so remarkable that courts often convene without a single case standing on the docket.

They are amiable, courteous, kind and hospitable, and the stranger is ever welcome to the shelter of their roof, and to a seat at their board. They are ever willing to extend immediate aid to any who may be in a suffering, needy condition, and the voice of charity never meets with a deaf ear. They are intellectual, energetic and enterprising, and exhibit a spirit of progressiveness altogether in keeping with the times. In society they are sociable, agreeable and refined, and with the gentler sex, this is remarkably so. Rascality,

and vagabondism are not tolerated, even in the least degree; and when any person inclined to such habits, happens to settle in their midst, (as such will steal into the best communities), they are soon led to understand that their presence is not required, accompanied with a gentle hint that the sooner they get out of the county the better it will be for them. Such is the character of the people of Wright county; and where a people are governed by these high and noble principles, it must inevitably follow that peace, prosperity and happiness, will always accompany them.

THE PRESS.

Newspapers have now become the first and best institutions in this or any other country where "free speech" and "free press" constitute the motto of a free people, and consequently they are entitled to a conspicuous place in a country's history. From reliable information we learn that the first newspaper started in the county was at Liberty in the summer of 1861, by G. D. Ingersoll. It entered upon its career under the name of the "*Wright County Free Press*," and lived just long enough to reap the benefit of printing an extended tax-list, when it was consigned to the tomb of the Capulets. The next was the "*Wright County Register*," published at the same place and edited by Mrs. Mary Reed. The first number was issued in January, 1868, and continued to be published at irregular intervals for about one year, when it followed in the steps of its illustrious predecessor. In March, 1869, the material of the *Register* was removed to Clarion, the county seat, where a new paper was about to be started under the name of the "*Wright County Monitor*," with William F. Smith as editor and publisher. It remained under his management until about March

of the following year, when the press and all the material of the office were sold to A. M. White, its present editor and publisher.

It is now a seven column sheet and is issued regularly on Wednesday of each week. Under his able management during the short time it has been in his hands, its patronage has been more than doubled, and from the ability and skill with which it is conducted, we predict for the *Monitor* increased prosperity and success, a glorious career in the future, and a quick classification among the leading journals of the northwest.

TO PEOPLE IN SEARCH OF HOMES.

To these we are prepared to say, from the deepest conviction and from close observation given to the nature of soil and climate of a great proportion of our western country, that Wright county naturally possesses advantages, and offers greater inducements to new settlers than any other section of country we have visited. The present season (1871), has been one of unprecedented drought, and knowing this we made it our business to visit the harvest-fields of a great many farmers, and we must say that a finer quality of grain we never saw in any country; and we assert on information received from a number of good farmers, that Wright county soil will produce, if properly cultivated, excellent corn even though unvisited by rain from planting till the time of gathering in. Such land as this strongly recommends itself to the first consideration of every man who is seeking a location to make himself a home. Some may raise the objection by saying the land is all prairie. Let us see what such an objection amounts to. We infer from this objection that the person making it prefers timber land. We acknowledge that such a preference would be ours

rather than settle out on a prairie forty or fifty miles away from timber, but the prairie of Wright county is not situated so, for the greatest distance any settler can be away from timber is ten or twelve miles at the farthest.

Wood can be bought in any portion of the county for from three to four dollars per cord, and placed right at a person's door, while if bought standing it can be had from one dollar and fifty cents to two dollars; so by this it will be seen that so far as Wright county is concerned there can be no objection raised about a scarcity of timber. We claim on the other hand that a prairie farm within a few miles of timber has many advantages to recommend it to a new settler over one located in the center of a body of timber. A person settling on the latter has to spend many years of hard toil and labor in clearing it before the land is in a fit state for proper cultivation, and by the time he has brought it to anything like a perfect condition, he has arrived close upon that mature age given for many to live, and thus by the time his farm reaches that state by which it is capable of rendering him ease and comfort, he finds that instead of living to enjoy it, old age and hard work have brought him to the verge of the grave. On the other hand a person settling on a prairie farm finds his place ready for the introduction of the plow at any moment, and just waiting to receive the seed in order to yield a plenteous harvest. Another advantage that the prairie farmer has, is, that he can plant his trees exactly where he wants them, and adorn his place to suit his own particular taste, and instead of spending years in cutting down timber preparatory to realizing the benefits that accrue from rich harvests, he can fill his granaries from year to year and watch his timber grow at the same time, and by the expiration of ten or fifteen

years he finds himself surrounded with timber sufficient for all time to come.

This is no mere imaginary statement, for we have seen many such farms on the prairie where ten years ago not a bush or a tree was to be seen; and there are many such to be seen throughout the western prairies at the present time, and not a few in Wright county. To the industrious workingmen of the over-crowded towns and cities of the East, who labor year after year for enough to eke out a mere existence, and who are altogether dependent on the rich and opulent for a means of subsistence, and who for every dollar earned for themselves put five or ten into the coffers of their affluent employers, to all such as these Wright county offers a hearty welcome. Why toil and labor all your lives to make the rich richer, and always be content to live in a state of poverty yourselves, when such golden opportunities are offered you? If you had only the means, you say, how quick you would come. We say, come without the means, but bring with you a pair of willing hands, strong arms, and a brave and honest heart, and the people of Wright county will see that you want for nothing while making yourself a home. These accompanied with a good and honest purpose, an energetic and enterprising spirit, are sure to bring success to every new settler who comes to Wright county, it matters not however poor he may be. You are satisfied to work for a dollar and twenty-five or fifty cents per day East; you can have the same or more here. There, you have no prospects of ever bettering your condition, and old age will find you helpless, surrounded with misery, want, and poverty, from which there is no relief but the alms-house. Here, thousands upon thousands of rich and fertile acres await your willing hands to yield forth their

hidden treasures, so that when old age comes, you can sit down peacefully at your door and smile upon your fields covered with rich and yellow grain, satisfied that come what may old age with all its wants finds you with everything to render you comfortable. Such are the homes that Wright county offers to all industrious workingmen, and to such as these the people say come, but to the idler or the individual who is too much of a gentleman to put his hand to the plow, or who considers himself above earning an honest dollar by the sweat of his brow; or the person who takes the world easy and says it owes him a living and he is bound to have it, work or no work; or the fop who thinks he must undergo the manipulation of the barber daily, who must have his hair artistically dressed, his boots highly polished, his neck-tie on just so, and his clothes neatly brushed before making his appearance even though his pockets are without a dollar, to all such as these the people of Wright county say, keep away, we don't want you. We have no toleration for any such; it is workingmen we want; men of nerve and endurance; men who are not afraid to work; men who consider it no disgrace to pull off their coats and go at whatever work they find to do by which they can earn an honest dollar; men with strong arms and willing hands. All such as these will meet with a welcome "all hail," from the people of Wright county—a county destined to be one of the most flourishing counties in the State of Iowa, whose past history is one of enviable glory and honor.

COUNTY OFFICERS.

County Auditor—John L Morse.

Clerk of District and Circuit Court—L. P. Davis.

Treasurer—W. W. Gates.

Recorder—R. K. Eastman.

Sheriff—Wm. D. Hulse.

County Surveyor—George A. McKay.

Superintendent of Schools—John D. Sands.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS.

Boone Township W. H. Gillespie, *Chairman.*

Liberty Township..... Wellington Nees.

Eagle Grove Township John Q. Hanna.

Troy Township..... J. D. Sells.

Woolstock Township... Gilbert Perry.

Wall Lake Township...R. H. Foster.

Clarion Township..... R. K. Eastman.

Vernon Township..D. M. Inman.

Iowa TownshipL. C. Dalrymple.

Pleasant TownshipAlfred Fisk.

Belmond Township.....L. H. Cutler.

Wright Co. Monitor,

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AINSLEY, S. F.	74	DUMOND, A.	28, 38, 71
ALLEN, Mr. ---	18	DUMOND, George	34
ALLEN, Ed	62	EASTMAN, Miss Cornelia	66
AMESBURY, G. A.	38	EASTMAN, R. K.	23, 59, 78, 91
-----	-----	ELDER, A.	40
		ELDER, J.	71
BACH GROVE	10, 14	-----	-----
BALLOU, Edwin	52, 55	FISK, Alfred	42, 44, 91
BARKER, Henry	40	FOSTER, R. H.	56, 91
BARNARD, ---	62, 63	FRANK, Henry	24
BARNES, M.	20, 22	FULTON, ---	38, 76
BARTON, James	10	-----	-----
BERRY, James	40	GATES, W. W.	35, 79, 91
BINGHAM, George	55	GAYER, J. C.	13
BORING, J.	62	GIBBONS, E.	26
BOYLES, John	20	GILLESPIE, W. H.	24, 26, 91
BRASSFIELD, Anson D.	10, 69	GILLMAN, Dudley	74, 75
BRASSFIELD, Lucy Ann	70	GOULDING, ---	72
BRASSFIELD, Mjr Winter	20, 69	GRAY, James	16
BREWER, R.	62	GRAY, William	40
BROCKWAY, Sylvester	24	-----	-----
BURBISON, R. I.	25	HANNA, J. Q.	18, 91
BUTTS, W. F.	40	HARTMAN, D. M.	9
BYERS, J. P.	47	HARVEY, Rev. W. F.	55
-----	-----	HATHAWAY, ---	14
CLARK, Charles A.	27	HEWITT, Judge ---	18
CLARK, L.	17	HEWITT, S. B., Jr.	10, 16
COOK, Mr. ---	12	HEWITT, S. B., Sr.	8, 10, 16
CRAPPER, Dr. C. H.	24	HUBBARD, E. S.	13
CRAPPER, Scott	10	HUISE, William D.	91
CURTIS, Dr. ---	23	HUNT, O.	71
CUTLER, G. L.	44, 72	HUNTER, J. D.	51
CUTLER, Dr. L. H.	28, 30, 38, 40, 71, 72, 91	HYNDMAN, S. M.	40
-----	-----	-----	-----
DALRYMPLE, L. C.	55, 91	INGERSOLL, G. D.	86
DAVIS, L. P.	37, 79, 91	INMAN, D. H./M.	65, 91
DAVIS, William	10, 16	-----	-----
DEAN, Judge ---	70	JOHNSON, Mr. ---	78
DEAN, David	10	JONES, J. H.	25
DEMMING, Mr. ---	63	-----	-----
DERSHEIT, ---	18	KEELING, Fred	20
DEVOTA GROVE	54	KENT, O. O.	38
DOMORE (fictitious name)	46, 48, 50, 52	-----	-----
DONALDSON, Robert A.	59	LAKE, D.	35
DOOLITTLE (fictitious name)	46, 48, 50, 52	-----	-----
DOTY, J.	20	-----	-----
DOUD, A. J.	45	-----	-----
DUFFY, Robert	55	-----	-----
DUKES, A.	34	-----	-----

LATHRUP, P. J.	72	PIERCE, S. D.	31, 42, 44, 72
LEONARD, D.	60	POUND, G. V.	40
LOOMIS, L. L.	71	PURCELL, Elery P.	55, 56
LUICK, --	44		
LUICK, D.	40, 44		
LUICK, F.	44		
LUICK, Henry	40	RANKIN, W.	40
LUICK, W.	42	REED, Mrs. Mary	86
		ROGERS, E.	71
MANN, J.	56	ROGERS, G. W.	15
MARTIN, C. H.	10, 24, 26	ROWAN, Robert	52, 55
MARTIN, H. B.	8, 20	ROWEN, Mr. --	78
MC CORMICK, William	57, 58, 60	ROWEN, William	74, 75
MC DANIELS, D. F.	62	ROWLEY, R. P.	74
MC INTOSH, O. C.	20, 58	ROYCE, George W.	74
MC INTOSH, O. W.	30, 69		
MC INTYRE, A.	24	SANDS, John D.	91
MC KAY, George A.	53, 59, 60,	SEAMAN, C.	79
	78, 91	SELLS, J. D.	10, 12, 14, 91
MC MILLAN, D.	43	SHAW, Mr. --	54
MC MILLER, Jno.	11	SHEETS, Thomas	30
MEDARY, W. T.	43	SHELDON, C. P.	65
MEEKER, R. U.	19	SIBLEY, Dr. M.	23
MELROSE, John	20, 59, 69	SILLS, William	16
MESERVEY, Judge --	8	SMITH, W.	78
METZ, L. P.	62	SMITH, William F.	86
MIDDLETON, Brothers	10, 12	STRIKER, William	10, 12, 14
MONTGOMERY, W. H.	10, 20, 22		
MORSE, J. L./John L.	40, 41, 91		
		THOMPSON, ---	38
NEECE/NIECE/NEES, Wellington	20, 22,	THOMPSON, Judge A. D.	70
	69, 91	THOMPSON, G. A.	29
NELSON, Mr. --	56	TREAT, L. L.	51
OAKLEY, Mr. --	78, 79	USHER, Alexander	70
OLIVER, T.	28	USHER, Nelson	20, 22
OTENHEIMER, Brothers	14		
OVERACKER, Anthony	40		
OVERACKER, Samuel	60	WADSON, John	18
OVERBAUGH, C. N.	20, 22	WATKINSON, B. F.	62, 63, 64
		WHITE, Mr. --	66
PACKARD, Brothers	24	WHITE, Brothers	40
PAINE, N. B.	10, 16, 18	WHITE, A. M.	78, 79, 87, 92
PARMALEE, J. W.	47, 70	WILCOX, Mr. --	10
PAYNIE, R.	24	WILLIAMS, J. P.	41
PEARL, W.	60	WILLIAMSON, J.	33
PERRY, Gilbert	62, 78, 79,	WILLSON, S.	21
	91		
PETERSON, H. B.	65	YORK, W. B.	49, 60
PIERCE, --	72	YOUNG, J. C.	39, 78
		ZIMMERMAN, Fred	24

